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Country Gentleman's
LETTER
TO THE
CITIZENS
OF
DUBLIN.

By JOHN FLEMMING, Esq;



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T H E

Country Gentleman's

L E T T E R, &c.

WHEN the chief city of any state or kingdom, is so embroiled and divided as the city of *Dublin* is at present, and the convulsion arising from the settling and adjusting a point, on the determination of which, it's future prosperity or adversity must essentially depend; I think it strictly incumbent on every capacitated particular, who helps to constitute such state or kingdom, to give, from the dictates of an unprejudiced judgment, whatever assistance lies within the sphere of his respective knowledge; First from the inseparable connexion of interests, subsisting between the constitution of the body and it's members, and next from the influence that the counties and corporate towns of a nation, must or do generally receive from the determinations of their metropolis.

THE point which now does, or chiefly ought to engross, the care and application of the city of *Dublin*, is no less than choosing and deputing two persons, who are to represent their whole body in the august assembly of the legislature; an assembly, calculated and designed, by the wisdom of our ancestors, to support and defend the fundamental laws then established by them for the publick good, and vested with an unbounded authority, to enact what other municipal or positive statutes, they should in their care and wisdom, ac-

ording to the future exigencies and circumstances of the state, think further necessary.

SINCE then, the persons entitled by the city votes, must be certainly sharers of such extraordinary power, how maturely and deliberately ought every step to be taken? Prejudice, friendship and interest, should all be laid aside, and the utmost circumspection made superintendent of all their proceedings; though you should be greatly obliged to one or more of the competitors, think not yourselves thereby necessitated, to give him or them your vote, should he or they seem otherwise disqualified, all considerations should, and must in reason, give way to that which tends to the defence and support of your LIBERTIES; and should any of you, through a mistaken notion of gratitude, think your selves obliged, to retaliate any private favour conferred upon you, in such a manner, that is, to give your suffrages to a person destitute of such abilities as are requisite to the execution of so material an office. What shocking thoughts and excruciating reflections, must consequently arise from your conscious impotence, to remedy the numberless calamities of the miserable slavery, wherein such weak and premature considerations would certainly plunge your unhappy POSTERITY!

STRUCK with the idea of such misfortunes, (which I look upon to be the unavoidable consequences of an election, either influenced by private friendship or prejudice) as well as excited by my hearty wishes and sincere affection for the city of *Dublin*: I have made bold, my countrymen, thus to address you, and shall think my self infinitely repaid, if any part of the advice contained therein, deserves your notice; if not, I shall be
satisfied

satisfied with the consciousness of having done all that in my power lay, to serve you.

THE most effectual and infallible method to direct and assist you at the present critical juncture, is, to take a cool and dispassionate view of the matter before you; you must consider, that the filling of the present vacancies is the time to provide for the recovery of those liberties, the loss of which you seem so much to regret, by choosing persons equal to the trust that is inseparable from the office.

YOU will undoubtedly be surpris'd, when I acquaint you, that their being honest, virtuous and disinterested only, can never sufficiently qualify them: I must allow, such noble virtues are most requisite ingredients in the composition of a PATRIOT; but the state of your affairs requires the necessary additions of genius and penetration; benevolence without the power of emancipating, is a barren virtue, and he, whose good intention to serve you is starved, through the narrowness of his genius, or elocution, must often run the hazard (though his own cause were reason itself) of being overcome by the venal, spacious, and sophistical rhetoric of a more powerful, but less virtuous orator.

THEREFORE, if possible, have none but such as are equally conspicuous for their talents and their virtues; such best can adjust your disconcerted liberties, and answer the glorious end of their constitution.

A CONSIDERATION that your representatives are the channels through which all the future laws that are to affect your city, must circulate; would be no improper prelude to your acting, and considering them once in this light, it is easy to conceive,

ceive, that the least let, stay, or impediment to the free and requisite circulation of those laws, must be of the last ill consequence to the end proposed, which is, or ought to be, the recovery, establishment and protection of your liberties.

THE analogy between the BODY NATURAL and the BODY POLITICK, though a thread-bare similitude, calls on me here so *a-propos*, that I can't avoid the allusion.

IN one, should the duct, or ducts, that communicate the vital fluid to a particular member, be impaired or obstructed, if wise and skilful physicians (for such virulent distempers always evade the practical skill of assuming empiricks) do not immediately administer proper deobstruents; a total stagnation will consequently ensue, and perhaps the unfortunate body be deprived of one of it's most useful Members.

So in the BODY POLITICK, when it has lost any member, especially it's most considerable one; for I look upon those members as lost when become by being deprived of their noblest faculties, and rendered incapable of longer assisting in the support of the great end of their constitution, RATIONAL LIBERTY. I say such violent particular disorders, are strong symptoms of a general decay, as the contagion that dare attack the strongest, must be greatly spirited to further devastations by the conquest of this it's most effectual prop.

FROM this, my countrymen, you may discern how greatly the whole kingdom is interested in your behaviour at this crisis; you are the largest, richest, and consequently the most powerful city in th s nation, without comparison. Providence seems to have marked you out not only for the recovery of those liberties you seem to think your
aldermen

aldermen have snipt you off; but also that the emanations of FREEDOM beaming from your city, should penetrate the utmost limits of this island, defacing by its powerful influence, the inglorious tract, of despicable *slavery*, and perpetuating the inestimable blessing of LIBERTY to it's happy and obliged posterity.

It is true that this kingdom has a dependence on *England*, exclusive of it's living under and being governed by the same laws; but that can be no bar or damp to the asserting of it's liberties, as the dependence is no other, than such as a child has on it's parent.

I DARE venture to affirm, that there is not above one in fifteen of the inhabitants of this kingdom, who are in any degree above the rank of day labourers, or the like servile employments, but are all of *English* descent. As to the landed or trading part, it would be a difficult task to find any worth calling a number otherwise; it is true that most but such as came over since the reformation, were, through the difference of religion, much alienated from their mother-nation, and looked on them selves in a great measure, as a different people. But the laws provided for the discouragement of *Popery*, since the glorious revolution, have effectually remedied every inconvenience that might be suspected from that quarter, by necessitating them, at the hazard of losing their fortunes, to be of the same religion, as they were of the same stock, by improving their minds, polishing their understandings, and exposing the gross errors and superstitious darkness of their deluded progenitors. I will allow that the first converts, fraught with the prejudices of their educations, may languish and repine after their primitive

tive principles. But their posterity, in the right of rational creatures, must, cannot but, hereafter, acknowledge the infinite obligations they will lie under to laws, which has rescued them out of such *Egyptian* darkness.

IN short, my countrymen, if we, without prejudice, consider the matter, it will cost but very little thought to conclude ourselves an *English* colony, and be assured that our mother nation waits but till our being sufficiently convinced of it, entitles us to share every benefit and emolument that she herself enjoys.

IF power increases by addition, sure it may be reasonably inferred from thence, that *England*, by the accession of so large, so fertile, and so well situated an island as ours, must be vastly enhanced in every particular, requisite to the making a people great and powerful; think then how far it would be consistent with the politics of so wise a nation, to deprive themselves of such evident advantages, by discouraging and suppressing the only means capable of producing them.

No, my countrymen, the reason consists in part of the inhabitants not being yet sufficiently prepared for the enjoyment of such advantages.

THE *popery acts* have yet more work to do, which when properly effected, and the malecontents sufficiently reconciled to the establishment, we may then be assured that *England* will grant as heartily as we ask, every thing that can possibly redound to our benefits; it is their interest so to do: and nothing can more effectually accelerate the grant, than a hearty support, a fixed retention of those liberties you now do, or may possess.

FREEDOM is the chief characteristick of *England*, and will ever bear a strong relation to itself, therefore

therefore must sympathetically favour every tendency and effort towards the extension of its reign.

WHAT I have here said, on the nature of our dependence on *England*, is merely calculated to divest you of any Dependence that might arise from a mistaken conclusion, *i. e.* that you are hunting the shadow of a substance, long since disposed of by the *English*, (a doctrine, as I am told, very elaborately inculcated by the seeming Friends, but real enemies of this nation,) but hope, that the reasons offered has sufficiently evinced to the contrary; and that nothing may deter you from applying this great and critical occasion to the recovery and establishment of those liberties you may enjoy.

Among the different candidates, who have set up for the important seats now vacant in your city, you yourselves are the properest judges of such as are best qualified to serve, as you have had the frequentest opportunities of being acquainted with their talents and abilities.

Amongst them all, none has so many public admirers, or denouncers, as Mr. *Lucas*; nor any, who have furnished matter in any degree so fit to form a judgment of their virtues, or vices from, as he; wherefore, I shall confine my observations to him alone; but must previous to my proceeding any further, solemnly declare, that I have not the least acquaintance with the gentleman, farther than reading some of his letters: Nay, I am sure, above two in three of them have escaped my knowledge. But the good sense, strong reasoning, public spirit, and plain dealing, contained in such of them as I have seen, and the venality, prejudice and sophistry of such as were exhibited

against him, has thus publicly induced me to divulge my sentiments concerning him, exempt from the least private attachment whatsoever.

THE magazines, from whence Mr. *Lucas's* enemies have chiefly drawn their arms, are two ; the first, is branding him with ill-nature ; a most unchristian-like imperfection, I must allow, were he guilty of it ; the second, is an accusation of poverty ; a thing that can never appear a crime to any, but persons, whose venal suffrages center alone in their private interests.

Now, in order to be better acquainted with the significancy of those charges, let us commit them separately to the test of invincible reason, where, if they bear any connexion with, or relation to, the truth, we may venture to conclude the inferences just. But, if to the contrary, they be found false, malicious, and without foundation, the superstructure will consequently fall.

THEN, first to see, how far he incurs the character of malevolent.

SAY, the *Anti-Lucasians*, LUCAS, in a malicious and ill-natured manner, attacks and asperses the characters of the *aldermen*, and unrighteously endeavours to raise himself on the ruin of their reputations, by sophistically exaggerating mole-hills into mountains, and craftily imposing on the credulity of the populace.

How far Mr. *Lucas* is guilty of this charge, I think the city itself the properest tribunal to determine, as it was to the free and independent part thereof, he directed all his papers ; wherein he accuses the *aldermen* of stripping and depriving the city in a tyrannical manner, of it's rights and liberties, infringing it's charters, iniquitously appropriating it's profits and emoluments to private
uses,

uses, and disposing of it's public offices in a mercenary manner, with many other impeachments, too tedious to insert.

Now, I must own the silence of the city in any thing to the contrary of all this, has strongly induced me to conceive a good opinion of the charge; and having a great regard for the proverb to that purpose, cannot avoid construing their taciturnity, as an assent to the truth of his allegations.

BESIDES, it would be the lowest absurdity to imagine, that so large and considerable a body of people as constitute the city of *Dublin*, would suffer their *aldermen*, the fathers of their city, (had they executed the trust reposed in them, according to the intent of deputing it) to be undeservedly traduced by the audacious scurrilities of a private particular.

INSTEAD of which, not a single effort has been made by any part of the city, in defence of their impeached *aldermen*, except that trifling affair, in relation to the summoning of *post assemblies*, which has been so fully confuted by Mr. *LUCAS's Fifth Letter*, that it would be needless in me to handle it further.

ON the other hand, many corporations seem so well assured of the veracity of Mr. *Lucas's* assertions, that they have not only thought it incumbent on them to return him public thanks for his unwearied diligence and activity, in detecting and defeating the abuses and male-practices of the *aldermen*; but, have also further encouraged him to persist in his virtuous labours, by promising to support and abett all his just endeavours for the re-establi hment of the *city liberties*.

If there can be stronger symptoms than those of the city's consciousness of their *aldermen's* depravity, I much wonder, nor can any thing more corroborate the truth of Mr. *Lucas's* assertions.

For my part, I cannot divine, with what shew of reason he can be stigmatised with ill-nature, for couching the characters of those men in the only terms capable of conveying an adequate sense of their crimes. Perhaps, Mr. *Lucas's* censurers, notwithstanding the attested guilt of *their minions*, would have had him comprise the impeachment in words to the following purpose.

THAT a set of very *honest, virtuous, and disinterested* PATRIOTS, *i. e.* the *aldermen*, had with the utmost *justice and equity*, betrayed their *trust*, and abused their *power*, by righteously trampling on the *liberties* they ought to protect, and by their elaborate endeavours to oppress the people they were constituted to defend.

SUCH an irony might seem the most complaisant method of accusing so considerable persons as the *aldermen*; though in my opinion, it would have been the most farcical.

BUT to be serious, I cannot imagine how any, but people fraught with the utmost prejudice, can think *Lucas* blameable for the urging of *truths*, not only supported and ratified by the utmost authority; but also, by the consequences, which may be reasonably infered material, in the highest degree, to the future *welfare and prosperity* of the city; and nothing, my countrymen, can more evidently expose the *malice and partiality* of his detractors, as well, as evince the *uninfluenced tenor and disinterested ends* of Mr. *LUCAS's* real *patriotism*, than their furiously presuming to brand him with crimes, of which, you yourselves have acquitted

quitted him, and his unwearied efforts to effect the glorious design, under discouragements that might well have quashed the ardour of a less hearty PATRIOT.

I SHALL next take a short view how far Mr. Lucas's poverty may disqualify him, and then conclude.

IT is a common cry with several, that Lucas, by his noise and bustle (as they style it) to gain his election, has greatly impaired his circumstances, and that his continued endeavours now results from no other view, than, that when he has got into the house, he may, by becoming a tool to the ambitious designs of the great, repair his shattered affairs, and enrich him at the expence of his country.

Now I shall apply to the city as the properest judge in this case as in the last, and appeal to it whether Mr. Lucas, long prior to the decease of it's late representatives, has not been as sanguine in the promotion of it's INTEREST and defence of it's LIBERTIES as he has been ever since? Whether it be consistent with common sense to imagine, that a person of Mr. Lucas's penetration and sagacity, should act so inconsistent with the dictates of either, (were his designs interested) as to follow the only sure means to render them abortive.

IF he intended to raise himself on the ruin of his country, I can not think him so great a novice, as to be ignorant of the means: He would have flattered the great, fawned on the powerful, applauded their worst actions, and in his sphere have been a constant abettor of their conduct, instead of railing at flabbing, and apostrophizing their vices.

SURE none but he, who would stop at no illegal act whatsoever, to enrich himself, would be so hardy as to declare poverty incapable of virtue : I own we live in an age so very depraved, that vice seems to be in the zenith of it's reign, yet am I far from being so general in my verdict, as to exclude all from the practice of virtue ; that I really believe (and rejoice in it) that there are many who dare yet assert her cause, notwithstanding the inequality of the combat.

AND surely if he, whose unwearied endeavours tend to the detecting and obviating of vice, without any interested, partial, or sinister view, reasonably evident in the design of his undertakings, deserves not the title of virtuous ; I should be glad to know who can ? And if the characters of men, can with any degree of certainty, be extracted from their conduct, or behaviour, I apprehend it would be a difficult task to find any thing in Mr. *Lucas*, the reverse of honesty. But human nature is fallible and consequently obnoxious to degeneracy ; therefore your best policy will consist in choosing persons who are the most likely to answer your ends : So leave it to your considerations on what is said, to determine whether Mr. *Lucas's* poverty, exclusive of human fallibility, can be, in any wise, reasonably deemed detrimental to his patriotism.

AND now, my countrymen, I shall conclude with heartily exhorting you to take a narrow and critical view of every thing directed to you on this great subject, lest you be induced by the premeditated sophistry of designing men, to act prematurely, contrary to your true interests. LIBERTY is the dearest prerogative of a rational Being ; but easily ravished from the state or people where vice predominates,

predominates, or, the minds of men are so vitiated; as to neglect all considerations of posterity. When gone, how hard to be recovered, since covetousness, bribery and venality, the wicked ministers who dethroned her, must then be in power, and constantly in wait for every opportunity that can tend to the support and perpetuating of their influence. Think then, how dear and inestimable is every opportunity to be thought, which in the least favours it's recovery; consider impartially the difference between the sordid temporary views of transitory interest, and the true and permanent glory that must result from a virtuous and uninfluenced behaviour on this great occasion; if you do, you can never act inconsistent with virtue, which is the true interest of a rational creature, and that PROVIDENCE may not only direct and assist you in this, but in every thing else that can contribute to your true interest and glory, is, and ever shall be, the hearty and sincere wishes of,

Gentlemen,

Your most affectionate Fellow-Subject,

and

most humble Servant,

J. FLEMMING.

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